

# ESSEX NEWS | JUNE 2022



## First Selectman's Quarterly Newsletter

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Now that the warm weather has arrived it's nice to see so many people enjoying the civic campus, marinas, shops, restaurants, and attractions that make Essex a unique place to live, work and play. I'd like to welcome the new residents as well as the new restaurants and businesses in Town. I encourage everyone to take advantage of all there is to do in our three villages at this time of year.

First of all, I would like to thank the Essex residents for unanimously supporting the annual budget. The \$26,042,584 combined Town and Board of Education budget plan for fiscal year 2022-2023 was approved by voters at our Annual Town Budget Meeting held May 9th. The total spending package, which reflects a 1.52% increase, includes the Town government budget, an appropriation for Essex Elementary School, and the Town's share of the Region 4 education budget. I would like to give thanks to Finance Director Tracey Celentano, Selectmen Stacia Libby and Bruce Glowac, and the Board of Finance.



That being said, the values of used cars were inflated at the time of our 2021 Grand List. To alleviate the burden of this artificial increase in value on our taxpayers, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have elected to adopt a separate lower mill rate of 19.50 for our 2021 motor vehicle grand list. The tax bills received for cars in July will reflect this separate lower mill rate.

I would like to remind residents that the Town does not have an ordinance on the hours of operation in which a contractor or landscaper may work at a property in our community. We would expect such hours to be 7 am - 5 pm on weekdays with more limited work on the weekends. We rely on residents to be neighborly and considerate by ensuring that construction and the use of power tools and landscaping equipment be used only during these times. We have avoided both noise and blight ordinances, but we do get complaints, so please be mindful of your neighbor's right to enjoy their property.

Also, please remember to be diligent in making sure your trees, shrubs and bushes are not infringing on the Town sidewalks or roads. Overgrown plants may impact people's ability to use the roads or the sidewalks. This is a safety issue and sight line concern for pedestrians and traffic. There are numerous areas in Town where you can't walk on a sidewalk with a wheelchair or a baby carriage because the plants have invaded the space.

CT Water has been working since the beginning of April replacing approximately 1.2 miles of 60-year-old water main on Main Street (Route 604) in Centerbrook and Ivoryton. We anticipate completion of this project in July followed by the State DOT repaving the entire roadway in August. Please consider rerouting to Route 153 when possible, to help reduce traffic. Water main work on New City and North Main streets in Essex will also be completed in July. The restoration of these capital projects will conclude with repaving Maple Ave, Riverview, New City St., and a section of Foxboro Rd. in August. We appreciate your patience during these necessary disruptions.

Hurricane season has arrived. Hurricane season is June 1st - November 30th each year, although storms can occur outside these dates. The Town of Essex has an [Emergency Preparedness Guidebook](#) and you may want to refer to these guidelines to help you plan.

The Summer Concert Series, sponsored by the Park and Recreation Department, runs from June 21st through the middle of August at our Town greens in Essex and Ivoryton. Concerts are Tuesday evenings in Ivoryton and Wednesday evenings in Essex from 6:30 pm - 8 pm. For other Town events, take a look at the Board of Trade's website, [www.essexct.com](http://www.essexct.com).

The [Essex Valley Railroad](#), [Connecticut River Museum](#) and [Ivoryton Playhouse](#) all have schedules for the summer season. Please support them!

Finally, congratulations to the Valley Regional High School Class of 2022!

All the Best,

Norm

## HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

### ***What permit do I need to build or renovate a dock in Essex?***

The Harbor Management Commission advises Essex residents planning a new dock or renovating an existing dock to be mindful of the permitting process required by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Land and Water Resources Division (LWRD).

The goals of the permitting program are to protect our coastal resources, promote safe navigation, and balance private rights of access with the public's right to use and enjoy public trust waters.

This website provides important information regarding dock permits:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Coastal-Resources/Coastal-Permitting/Coastal-Permitting>

Frequently Asked Questions about the permitting process are covered here:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Coastal-Resources/Coastal-Permitting/Frequently-Asked-Questions>

Unpermitted docks are subject to removal. Existing docks are expected to be maintained.

The Harbor Management Commission will help with any questions at [ehmc@essexct.gov](mailto:ehmc@essexct.gov). Information about the Commission is on our website: [Harbor Management Commission](#)

Terry Stewart, Chair  
Essex Harbor Management Commission

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### **Why is my permit taking so long?**

When a homeowner applies for a permit for a project they wish to do at their house, they naturally want the process to move quickly. Believe it or not, the Town staff want that too. How then do things get so bogged down?

Sometimes, there may be several applications that came in before yours and we do try to process them in the order they were submitted. On our end, there may be times when a staff member is on vacation or out sick. Not ideal, but in small towns there may not be redundant staff available. Often though, there are things that an owner and/or applicant

can do to speed things up.

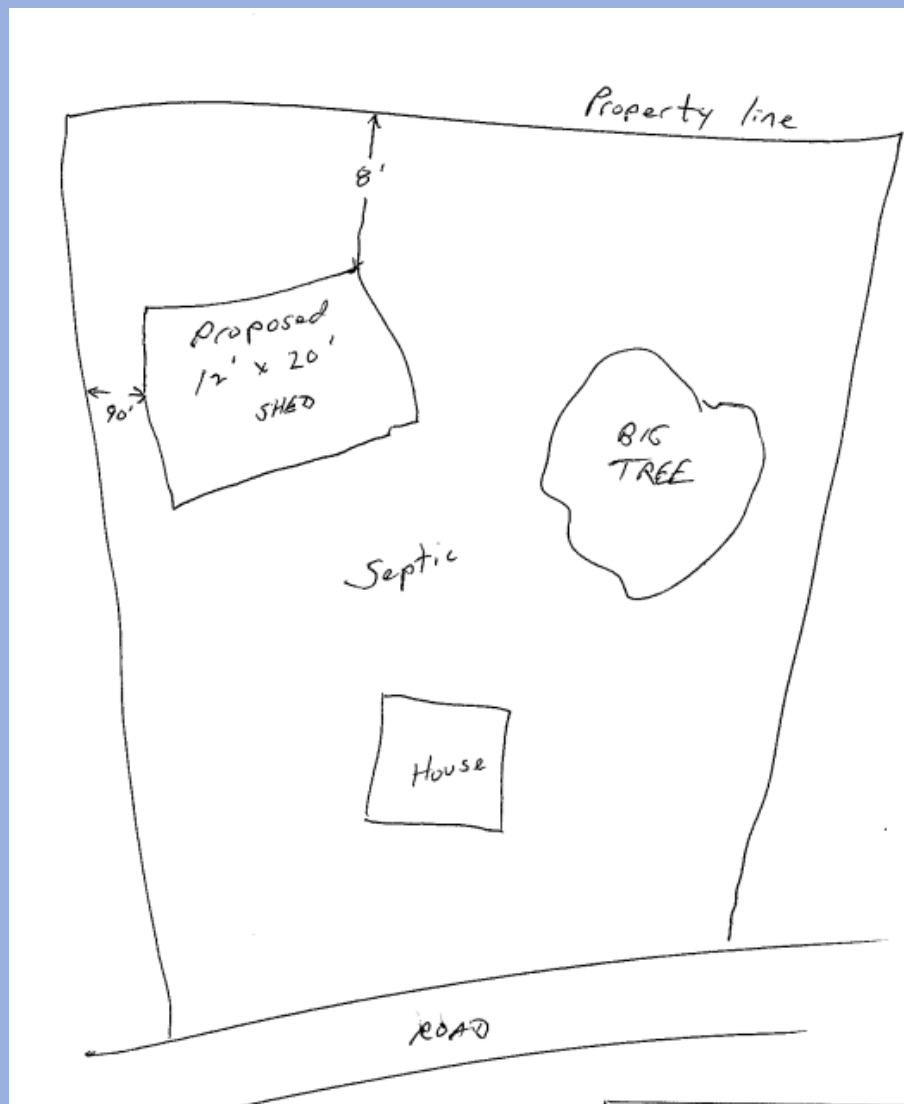
Especially in these times of electronic submissions the expectations are that we can process just as soon as an application arrives. While that may be the case, we are increasingly finding applications without the necessary forms submitted, without payment and usually deficient site plans. While we do have GIS capabilities and assessor maps that we use when possible, they are not accurate enough for many applications. We must evaluate applications for critical zoning setbacks and health code setbacks for septic components and wells. Some sort of scaled drawing is usually needed.

Okay, site plan ready – check  
Forms submitted – check  
Payments submitted – check  
Good to go.....right?

Nope, the homeowner just changed their mind and wants a somewhat (maybe even larger) different project reviewed.

So, the moral of the story is; decide exactly what you want before you apply, submit all applications drawings and site plan at the same time, submit payment with the applications and provide good contact information should questions arise. With your help, we can provide a more efficient path to your permits.

***(See the typical sketch below that we sometimes get for review!)***



### **What we see regarding the above site plan -**

1. The proposed shed is bigger than the house!
2. 8' is much larger than 90'.



3. The septic is what? The tank? The leaching fields? How far is the proposed structure from the septic components?
4. A scaled drawing helps so we can determine code required setbacks to the septic system and property lines.

## INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION

### **If you are lucky enough to live by an inland wetland, watercourse or vernal pool – Who are you going to call before making changes to your property?**

New to Town or seasoned resident, it is always good to be aware of State and local requirements for inland wetlands and waterways. Here's a link to a few frequently asked questions and recommendations: [Wetlands and Watercourses FAQ](#) from your Essex Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (EIWWC). For more information or additional questions you can call or email Carey Duques, Land Use Official at 860-767-4340, extension 115 or [cduques@essexct.gov](mailto:cduques@essexct.gov).

## PARK & RECREATION

Wondering what to do this summer? Check out Essex Park and Rec's summer programs and activities for people of all ages. The popular free Summer Concert Series is back again this year. Bring a blanket or chair and sit back and enjoy great live music every week throughout the summer. All concerts are held from 6:30pm to 8:00pm.

June 21	Southern Voice	Ivoryton Green
June 29	Leaf Jumpers	Essex Green
July 5	Butter Jones	Ivoryton Green
July 13	Shorebreak	Essex Green
July 19	Bloomer	Ivoryton Green
July 27	Middletown Symphonic Band	Essex Green
August 2	Long Island Sound Band	Ivoryton Green
August 10	Blues on the Rocks	Essex Green
August 16	Local Honey	Ivoryton Green
August 24	Coast Guard Dixieland Jazz Band	Essex Green

Essex's [Town Parks](#) offer plenty of ways to exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Grove Street park has free lighted tennis courts that are open until 9:30 pm. Children can build their muscles, coordination, and imagination on the park's play scape. Hubbard Field has a basketball court that is open from dawn till dusk, along with a beach volleyball area. Hubbard and Comstock Parks are home to Essex's two baseball fields and town Little League and Softball leagues. Bring a fishing pole to the Essex Town Green, Viney Hill Brook or Sunset Pond parks. Viney Hill Brook Park also has a hiking trail and dog park. Enjoy a picnic at one any of Essex's parks, including historic Dickinson Park, the smallest of the parks. All parks, except Dickinson, have restrooms. For directions to Essex parks and nature preserves, click [here](#).

For more information about Essex sports & enrichment programs, please visit the [Essex Park and Rec](#) page and visit our [Facebook page](#). To sign up for paid programs, visit [www.essexct.recdesk.gov](http://www.essexct.recdesk.gov).

## REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

The Democratic and Republican Primaries in Connecticut will be held on Tuesday, August 9, 2022. Voting will take place at the Essex Townhall from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm.



You must be registered with either the Democratic or Republican Party to vote in their Primary.

Registrars of Voters  
Caitlin Riley  
Barbara Ryan

## SUSTAINABLE ESSEX

Sustainable Essex collaborated with Sustainable Deep River and Sustainable Chester to host an Earth Day Event/Repair Cafe at the Bushy Hill Nature Center on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers at the family-oriented event helped repair items that needed mending, thereby keeping them from the waste stream, and saving resources needed for their replacement. A future repair café is planned. Volunteers also taught attendees about plastic thin film recycling, composting, and the Town of Essex food scrap collection program. Children and adults participated in seed-planting and animal visits at the farm. Thank you to all our volunteers!

Speaking of food scraps, FREE food scrap collection is available at the Essex Transfer Station. As food goes to the landfill and rots, it produces methane—a greenhouse gas even more potent than carbon dioxide. The Town has chosen Blue Earth Compost, a company that collects food scraps and delivers them to the Quantum Biopower facility in Southington, CT. This facility is an anaerobic digester that uses the organic scraps to create methane which is used to generate electricity. Collect your food scraps in a bucket or compostable bag and drop them off at the Essex Transfer Station.



Electric Vehicle (EV) charging use is up at the EV charging station behind the Essex Post Office. Discussions are underway for the placement of an additional charging station in town.

Essex residents of all three villages are welcome to participate for the second year in the Connecticut River Conservancy's "Source to the Sea" clean-up. Mark your calendars now for a fun and rewarding Saturday morning, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Information on how to participate will be coming. We had a great turn out last September, made lots of new friends, and prevented lots of trash from reaching our waterways, the Connecticut River, and Long Island Sound.



### **FROM THE DESK OF THE TAX COLLECTOR**

**We are encouraging everyone to pay online by credit card or mailing in their payment. There is a green drop off mailbox in the Town Hall parking lot, which is checked daily. Enclosed with tax bills will be envelopes for your convenience.**

**If you want a receipt, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and the taxpayer portion of your bill.**

### **TAXES WILL BE DUE JULY 1, 2022**

- The first installment of town tax for real estate, personal property and motor vehicle taxes are due on July 1, 2022.
- Supplemental motor vehicle taxes will be due January 1, 2023 by any person who owns a motor vehicle which was registered after the first day of October 2022 and registered before the first day of August 2023.

### **FROM THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES WEBSITE:**

#### **Current Connecticut resident**

- Connecticut law requires all Connecticut residents with a vehicle registration, driver's license, or non-driver identification card to notify the DMV within 48 hours of any change of address.
- Changing your address on your license does not change the address on your registered vehicle(s) or vice versa.
- Be sure to correct the tax town code on the change of address form as well when moving from one town to another.

#### **Moving into Connecticut from out of state**

- Once you have established residency in Connecticut, you have 30 days to transfer your out-of-state license to Connecticut. You have 60 days to transfer your vehicle registration(s) to this state.

Visit the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles website for additional information [www.ct.gov/dmv](http://www.ct.gov/dmv).

### **Here are just a few of the online services as listed on the DMV website:**

- Please take the time to check your license, vehicle registration(s) and emissions status. You can cancel your plates online (be sure to print a receipt of the cancellation) and you can re-register a vehicle (check out the timeframe).
- If you owe outstanding municipal motor vehicle property taxes, you will need to resolve your tax issue(s) before attempting to register or re-register. If you owe taxes to the Town of Essex and want to be taken off the delinquent list, pay by credit card online at [www.essexct.gov](http://www.essexct.gov).

Megan Haskins  
Tax Collector



## Rock Hazard Relocation

At the south end of Essex mooring field are two rock piles that were built as piers attached to the southern end of Thatchbed Island. Both piers are easily identified in a 1951 aerial photo. Unsure who built them, but it is generally accepted that they were built as fish weirs.

Over the years they deteriorated and became hazards to navigation. The Harbor Management Commission has been trying since the mid '90's to get them removed without finding a financially practical solution. Fortunately, times change and a new approach is available at a reasonable cost.

The Town of Essex has applied for and received a Certificate of Permission from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for relocating the rocks as part of a "living shoreline" effort to restore a portion of Thatchbed Island.

The rocks will be moved to a location on or above the Mean Low Water mark south of the existing island — where the island used to end. There will be an east to west line and a south to north line, forming an "L" or "V" with each leg running about 100 linear feet.

These rock piles will be approximately 5 feet high, meaning at high tide about a foot of rock will be visible and will provide a resting spot for cormorants, sea gulls, birds, etc. At low tide virtually the full rock pile will be visible. The rocks will reduce erosion from waves, wind, etc.

They will also form a "cornerstone" for the bigger restoration/preservation project which plans to use "tubes" filled with dredge materials from Essex Harbor forming a perimeter barrier to contain additional dredge material. The tubes and back-filled area will be seeded to grow grasses. This is beneficial use of dredge material rather than dumping in Long Island Sound.

As with the rocks, the tubes and back filled area will top off about a foot above mean high water, minimizing impact. This restored area follows the footprint of Thatchbed from the early 2000's and will protect the current area from further degradation. It is an eco-friendly plan that will restore habitat lost and protect property from extremes of waves and weather.

The first step — rock relocation — removing the hazard to navigation, placing the rocks in an area not normally navigated. This step is anticipated to take place this summer.

## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Just a reminder...

2022-2023 Dog License Renewals are due  
June 1st to June 30th, 2022.

Up-to-date Rabies vaccine information will also be required as well as any current spayed or neutered procedures. The cost to register a neutered/spayed dog is \$8.00 and \$19.00 for a dog which has not been neutered/spayed.



## PLEASE NOTE

Keeping dogs licensed is required by State Statute 22-338 and is not just a way to identify lost dogs, it is also a matter of safety for pets and their owners.

Thank you for your consideration.



## ESSEX VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2022

LETTER TO THE TOWN OF ESSEX,

On behalf of our board of directors and members, many thanks for the warm welcome we received along the parade route on Memorial Day.

This being the first year we returned to the annual Memorial Day Parade, it was great to once again march with fellow veterans on this solemn day when we honor all the fallen men and women that gave their all for our country.

Your applause was greatly appreciated and being led by the full board of selectmen, Norm Bruce and Stacia made this day even better.

The Sailing Masters, the Fire Department, the Webelos, the Boy Scouts and the support of local clergy was just great.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the National Guard and the Coast Guard Academy were a great addition to the parade this year, many thanks to all for making this special day even more special.

Art Davies,

President, E.V.M.H.

### Sign up for **Safer Essex Emergency Alerts**

Receive alerts about critical community information directly to your cell phone or email.

Go to [www.essexct.gov](http://www.essexct.gov) and search "Safer Essex" or call 860-760-4340 x112.

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